

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 DHA-05 TRSE-00 IO-13 SNM-02 AID-05 PC-01
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R 030530Z SEP 77
FM AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9429
INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KATHMANDU 3789

E.O. 11652 GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, SHUM, NP, US
SUBJ: AUDIENCE WITH KING BIRENDRA - HUMAN RIGHTS

REF: KATHMANDU 3642

1. DURING MY CALL ON KING AUGUST 19, I TOLD HIM
THAT SINCE THIS WAS MY FIRST OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS
BILATERAL RELATIONS, I THOUGHT IT RELEVANT TO OUT-
LINE TO HIM SOME OF PRESIDENT'S MAJOR NEW INITIATIVES
WHICH WERE HIGH ON ADMINISTRATION'S PRIORITY LIST.
THESE INCLUDED INCREASE IN DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE TO
LDCS LIKE NEPAL, PROMOTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND
TACKLING ILLICIT INTERNATIONAL TRAFFIC IN NARCOTICS.
THIS MESSAGE DEALS WITH OUR DISCUSSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS
QUESTION.

2. I STARTED BY TELLING KING THAT I WAS WELL AWARE
OF SPECULATION IN KATHMANDU IN RECENT MONTHS ABOUT
EFFECT PRESIDENT'S EFFORTS TO PROMOTE GREATER
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OBSERVANCE OF HUMANRIGHTS AROUND THE WORLD
MIGHT HAVE ON US/NEPALESE RELATIONS. HOWEVER,
SINCE MY ARRIVAL I CAREFULLY AVOIDED ANY DIS-
CUSSION OF SUBJECT WITH TWO EXCEPTIONS BECAUSE I
FELT THAT THIS WAS A SENSITIVE AND IMPORTANT ISSUE
THAT SHOULD IN THE FIRST INSTANCE BE TAKEN UP
DIRECTLY WITH HIS MAJESTY. THE TWO EXCEPTION

WERE ON THE OCCASSION OF MY FIRST COURTESY CALLS ON THE PRIME MINISTER (KATHMANDU 3278) AND CHIRAN THAPA (MEMCON DATED AUG 11). I ASSUMED THAT BOTH OFFICIALS HAD REPORTED SUBSTANCE OUR DISSUSSIONS ON THIS AND OTHER SUBJECT TO THE KING.

3. I WENT ON TO SAY THAT I HAD NOT YET HAD OPPORTUNITY TO STUDY THE SITUATION IN NEPAL CAREFULLY BUT IT SEEMED TO ME THAT ACCORDING TO US CRITERIA AND CONCEPTS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS MIGHT BE OCCURRING IN NEPAL. DURING MY BRIEFINGS IN WASHINGTON BEFORE PROCEEDING TO KATHMANDU QUESTIONS HAD ARISEN AND, IN FACT, NEPAL WAS ON SOME LISTS OF COUNTRIES WHERE SUCH PROBLEMS WERE BELIEVED TO EXIST. AT THIS POINT IN OUR RELATIONS AND AS THE BEST WAY TO BEGIN DIALOGUE ON THE SUBJECT, I THOUGHT IT BEST TO ENGAGE IN QUIET DIPLOMACY RATHER THAN MAKING A PUBLIC ISSUE AND RISK A CONFRONTATION FROM WHICH IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO EXTRACT OURSELVES. FOR THIS REASON, I HAD NOT MENTIONED SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN MY FORMAL REMARKS DURING PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS CEREMONY. I HAD ALSO AVOIDED JOURNALISTS BECAUSE I UNDERSTOOD THIS WAS ONE OF TOPICS THEY PLANNED TO RAISE WITH ME. HOWEVER, USG ATTACHES CONSIDERABLE IMPORTANCE TO THE SUBJECT AND AS IT WAS ONE WHICH COULD HAVE EFFECT ON THE HEALTH

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OF OUR BILATERAL RELATIONS, THERE WAS A NEED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE CLEARLY AND CANDIDLY.

4. I TOLD THE KING THAT SUBJECT OF HUMAN RIGHTS FUNDAMENTALLY INVOLVED A FEW SIMPLE BUT IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES BUT THEIR PROMOTION LED TO MANY COMPLICATED QUESTIONS AND EMOTIONS INCLUDING CHARGES THAT US WAS INTERFERING IN INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF OTHER COUNTRIES. IT WAS THEREFORE TIMELY TO HAVE KING AND HIS GOVERNMENT UNDERSTAND AS CLEARLY AS POSSIBLE WHAT OUR POLICY WAS, WHY WE WERE PRESSING SUBJECT AND HOW WE PROPOSED TO DEAL WITH QUESTION. SEVERAL RANKING OFFICIALS OF USG HAD ADDRESSED THESE QUESTIONS PUBLICLY, THE MOST RECENT BEING SPEECH MADE BY DEPUTY SECRETARY CHRISTOPHER IN CHICAGO AUGUST 9. THIS WAS A COMPREHENSIVE AND CLEAR-CUT EXPOSITION OF US VIEWS AND I COMMENTED IT TO THE KING AS REQUIRED READING FOR ANYONE WANTING TO HAVE GOOD UNDERSTANDING OF THIS US INITIATIVE. I REVIEWED KEY POINTS OF THIS SPEECH WITH KING CALLING HIS ATTENTION TO THE DEPUTY SECRETARY'S DESCRIPTION OF RANGE OF SIGNALS WE CAN USE TO GET OUR MESSAGE ACROSS. AT THIS POINT, PRIVATE

DISCUSSIONS SEEMED TO BE THE BEST WAY TO PROVEED
IN NEPAL AND THIS WAS COURSE I PLANNED TO ADOPT.

5. I EXPRESSED HOPE KING WOULD STUDY CAREFULLY
TEXT, WHICH I LEFT HIM, AND WE COULD PURSUE MATTER
AT OUR NEXT MEETING. I ADDED THAT SINCE THERE
WAS SO MUCH SPECULATION IN KATHMANDU OVER THIS QUESTION
AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT OUR INITIATIVE, IT SEEMED
TO ME TO BE USEFUL TO GIVE TEXT OF DEPUTY
SECRETARY'S REMARKS WIDERCIRCULATION. OUR AMERICAN
CULTURAL CENTERS AS ORDERED 200 COPIES OF THIS SPEECH
WHICH WE PLAN TO DISTRIBUTE TO RANKING OFFICIALS AND
LEADERS IN AND OUT OF GOVERNMENT AS FURTHER STEP
IN EXPANDING OUR DIALOGUE WITH GON AND NEPALESE.
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HERE AGAIN, I WANTED KING TO KNOW ABOUT IT AHEAD OF
TIME.

6. KING ACCEPTED TEXT OF DEPUTY SECRETARY'S SPEECH
AND SAID HE WOULD READ IT. HE EXPRESSED AGREEMENT
WITH COURSE OF ACTION I PROPOSED AND WITHOUT COMMITTING
HIMSELF ONE WAY OR OTHER ON QUESTION WHETHER THERE WAS
HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE IN NEPAL HE SAID THIS WAS A TOPIC
WE COULD REVERT TO IN FUTURE DISCUSSIONS. KING WENT
ON TO SAY THAT QUESTIONS OF THIS TYPE THAT AROSE

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KATHMANDU 3789

WERE TROUBLESOME AND OCCASSIONALLY PRESENTED HIM WITH VERYDIFFICULT DECISIONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THERE WAS THE CASE OF CAPTAIN YEGYA BAHADUR THAPA, AN ACKNOWLEDGED REVOLUTIONARY WHO HAD ENTERED NEPAL IN 1974 WITH THE DECLARED PURPOSE OF STARTING INSURRECTION AGAINST THE GOVERNMENT. BEFORE HIS CAPTURE, THAPA AND HIS FOLLOWERS HAD KILLED PEOPLE AND HAD TERRORIZED OKHALDHUNGA DISTRICT. HE HAD BEEN TRIED AND CONVICTED OF TREASON WHICH CARRIED DEATH PENALTY. KING SAID HE WAS UNDER HEAVY PRESSURE TO COMMUTE SENTENCE BY THOSE OPPOSED TO THE DEATH PENALTY AND BECAUSE OF ALL THIS AGITATION OVER HUMAN RIGHTS". ON THE OTHER HAND, THERE WERE POWERFUL ELEMENTS IN THE GOVERNMENT WHO ARGUED THAT THAPA WAS A SELF PROCLAIMED REVOLUTIONARY SOLDIER WHO HAD KILLED PEOPLE AND SHOULD BE TREATED IN SAME MANNER AS A SOLDIER WHO MUTINED. KING DID NOT SAY WHICH WAY HE WOULD DECIDE, BUT HE CLEARLY PREFERRED NOT TO BE FACED WITH THIS ISSUE.

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7. AS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF MORE DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS, KING SAID HE HAD RECENTLY BEEN CONSULTING VARIOUSNATIONAL POLITICAL FIGURES TO SEEK THEIR ADVICE ON REFORMS IN PRESENT PARTYLESS PANCHAYAT FORM OF GOVERNMENT. MOST HAD URGED HIM TO REVERT TO A PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM WITH DIRECT NATIONAL ELECTION. HOWEVER, THESE LEADERS ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED TO KING THAT POLITICAL PARTIES LACKED RESOURCES AND WOULD INEVITABLY TURN TO OUTSIDE SOURCES FOR FINANCIAL BACKNG WITH NEPALI CONGRESS LOOKINGTO INDIA AND LEFT WING GROUPS TO CHINA OR RUSSIA. THIS WAS UNHEALTHY SITUATION FOR NEPAL UNDER ANY CIRCUMSTANCES AND HARDLY WAY TO BUILD SOUND NEPALESE DEMORCATIC INSTITUTIONS. HE WAS ACCORDINGLY RELUCTANT TO ADOPT FORM OF GOVERNMENT WHICH INVITED THESE INFLUENCES INTO COUNTRY. COMMENT: KING HAS A POINT. IN MY DISCUSSIONS WITH VARIOUS POLITICAL LEADERS AND EX-PRIME MINISTER SUCH AS M.P. KOIRALA, TANKA PRASAD ACHARYA AND K.I. SINGH THEY HAVE ALL ADMITTED THEY NEEDED NON-NEPALESE FUNDING TO FINANCE THEIR POLITICAL ACTIVITIES. IN VARYING DEGREES THEY DEPLORED THIS PRACTICE BUT AT SAME TIME CYNICALLY DISMISSED ISSUE ON GROUNDS THAT WAS WAY SYSTEM WORKED HERE AND END OF FREE ELECTIONS

AND PARLIAMENTARY GOVERNMENT JUSTIFIED THE MEANS.
END COMMENT.

8. DISCUSSION THEN TURNED TO SUBJECT OF NARCOTICS,
BEING REPORTED IN SEPTEL.

9. ON AUGUST 22, CHIRAN THAPA CALLED TO SAY KING HAD
READ DEPUTY SECRETARY'S SPEECH AND HAD NO OBJECTION
TO ITS DISTRIBUTION IN NEPAL.

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COMMENT: I HAD CAREFULLY AVOIDED ASKING KING FOR
PERMISSION, GENERAL GUIDELINES ON SUCH MATTERS IN
NEPAL BEING THAT FOREIGN MISSIONS HAVE RIGHT
TO ISSUE OFFICIAL STATEMENTS BY GOVERNMENT
SPOKESMAN, BUT PALACE REACTIONING, I BELIEVE
ENCOURAGING. END COMMENT.
HECK

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